



## BERKHAMSTED LOCAL HISTORY AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 803417

Founded 1950 as Berkhamsted & District Local History Society

### CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2008

**MEETINGS.** The first three meetings of the season have shown record attendance, with an average of seventy. In September we welcomed Julie Wakefield, Assistant Keeper of the Museum of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, who gave us a fascinating talk entitled 'A History of Medicines from Nature.' Julie explained the different ways in which the medicinal properties were extracted from plants and the uses to which they were put. Many of these plants are still used today. She drew on the writings of William Ellis, of Little Gaddesden, to show how country people used plants in the first part of the eighteenth century and ended by showing us the registration certificate of Hubertus Figg as a pharmacist.

Our October meeting was a trip down Memory Lane when Ron White gave us a finely illustrated talk entitled 'The London Midland Railway.' In November we welcomed Colonel Sainsbury, who spoke on 'The Hertfordshire Home Guard 1940-1945', once again reviving memories for many of us. Our December meeting, with the usual seasonal drinks and mince pies, is to be a Members' Evening, when various members of the committee will be giving short illustrated talks and there will be a quiz. We hope you enjoy it.

**HERITAGE OPEN DAYS, 12<sup>TH</sup>-14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER.** This year we had nine different sites, leaving out the Rex cinema, but bringing in St. Mary's, Northchurch (Berkhamsted St. Mary) and St. John's, Broadway (Bourne End) Tours for the DHT Museum Store were fully booked for both days, and support was good for the Foundling Hospital (Ashlyns School) and for the Collegiate School (Old Hall and the Chapel). Figures were lower for 173, High Street (Figgs) than in past years and the overall figures were down on previous years. Many thanks to all those who helped to man the various sites and to those who supported the event as visitors.

**CASTLE MATTERS** The Visitor Room at the Castle was open for the Easter Weekend and then for the whole summer season from 3<sup>rd</sup> May onwards, Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, closing on 28<sup>th</sup> September. During that time, with the addition of a number of school and other groups, for which guided tours were provided, there were 2,943 visitors to the Visitor Room. I am extremely grateful to the 51 people who acted as stewards, the majority of which were Society members. In November Ken Wallis and I met with three representatives from English Heritage, who discussed with us plans to provide information panels in the

castle grounds as has recently been done at other unmanned English Heritage sites. They are scheduled to be ready for next season. Various other maintenance needs were also discussed.

**'WALK BACK IN TIME.'** The Chiltern Conservation Board has invited the Society to participate in their programme of historic walks and events in the Chilterns. On Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March and Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April, from 2pm-4.30pm, there will be 'A Historic Tour of Berkhamsted', including the castle and sites of interest in the town, adults £3.00, children, £1.50.

Booking is essential, to 01442 865158. Members are very welcome. Full details of events are available from me or on the website.

[www.chilternsaonb.org](http://www.chilternsaonb.org)

**DHT MATTERS.** In October we welcomed Isobel Aptaker as the new Museum Curator. She joins Nina Bevan, Curatorial Assistant who has been valiantly holding the fort for a while. We wish them both every success. In the summer DHT was successful in obtaining accredited museum status. In this connection Society members have been very busy carrying out an audit of archives and artefacts. Additionally the Society is working with the curatorial staff, in the New Year, on a combined tour of the Museum Store, the Castle and town for Hemel PROBUS.

**NEW PUBLICATION.** Your attention is drawn to the publication of a new book by the University of Hertfordshire Press, entitled 'A County of Small Towns: The development of Hertfordshire's urban landscape to 1800.' Edited by Terry Slater and Nigel Goose, there is a chapter on Berkhamsted. Further details are available from me.

**OTHER BOOKS.** There are still copies of Birtchnell's 'Bygone Berkhamsted', Nash's 'Reminiscences of Berkhamsted' and Eric Meadows 'Gateway to the Chilterns' available at a reduced price, as well as 'Berkhamsted- A History & Celebration' and the accompanying quiz book. Enquiries to me, on 865158.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS.** Subscriptions for 2009 are due on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Please see enclosed slip.

**JANUARY MEETING** On 21<sup>st</sup> January 2009 we welcome John Hopkins from Sarratt History Society, who will be speaking on 'Sarratt and the Victorian Church.' I hope to see you there.

**Thank you for your support in the past year.**

**A very Happy Christmas to you all!**

**Jenny Sherwood**